Revival of NCDEX

2045. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have permitted to revive the National Commodity Derivative Exchange (NCDEX) that has been banned in early sixties;

(b) if so, the reasons for its revival as intermediary between the producers and consumers of agro products;

(c) whether the spurt in prices of pulses and staple commodities in the market may be attributed to this in between NCDEX;

(d) whether Standing Committee has made any recommendation on this issue; and

(e) if so, whether Government are going to accept the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), Mumbai did not exist in early sixties and was never banned. The Government granted recognition to the NCDEX on 20th November 2003. The Exchange started its operation on 15th December, 2003. The recognition has been granted on a permanent basis.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

(d) The Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution in its Seventeenth Report has recommended that agricultural commodities especially foodgrains including coarsegrains, pulses and sugar need not be permitted to be traded in the commodity markets including forward/futures contract derivatives and options.

(e) In the context of discussion regarding whether and to what extent futures trading has contributed to price rise in agricultural commodities in recent times, the Government has set up an Expert Committee on 2.3.2007 under the Chairmanship of Professor Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission to study, *inter-alia*, the extent of impact, if any, of futures trading on wholesale and retail prices of agricultural commodities. A decision on forward trading in agricultural commodities would be taken after the Report of the Expert Committee is examined by the Government.

BPL families benefited under PDS in Assam

2046. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of BPL families in Assam;

(b) the number of BPL families benefited under the Public Distribution System in Assam;

(c) whether above BPL families have also been issued ration cards;

(d) if so, the number thereof and the reasons therefor;